Beyond Glare of Senate Hearings,

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CIA analysts, who have been watching their work subjected to the glare of Senate hearings, were given a pep talk yesterday by the agency's deputy director for intelligence, John L. Helgerson.

In a speech at CIA headquarters, Helgerson said he was aware of "the anxiety caused directorate employees and their families" by the three weeks of Senate hearings on the nomination of Robert M. Gates.

For the first time, the inner workings of the intelligence directorate were exposed as present and former analysts charged that Gates and then-CIA Director William J. Casey politicized selected analyses to conform with the Reagan administration's policies on the Soviet Union and Third World countries.

The hearings also produced warnings from Gates himself of the painful cutbacks that will come with reorganization of the U.S. intelligence community in the months ahead.

Helgerson gave his talk to a full house of 500 in the CIA's bubble-domed auditorium. His remarks were televised throughout the headquarters complex. He invited questions and comment, but, according to agency spokesmen, got only a few "on mundane matters."

According to a text provided by the agency, Helgerson told the analysts that he doubted a new director of central intelligence "will want a full-scale reorganization in our directorate" because the number of analysts working on the Soviet military over the past two years has already been cut by a fifth.

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CIA Analysts Get Pep Talk

That would leave more than 15 percent of the directorate's work force focused on that subject, according to Helgerson's figures.

But the bulk of his speech dealt with the charges of politicization and what he called "the widespread distortion and uninformed commentary about our work."

Noting that personal experiences shape people's thinking, Helgerson recalled two episodes in which Casey, who died in 1987, was the hero rather than the villain he has been made out to be at the confirmation hearings.

In one instance, when Helgerson was deputy director of the Near East-South Asia Office, he said he got Casey to permit publication of an assessment on Lebanon that "would not be welcome to policymakers" but that turned out to be right. In the other instance, involving a topic that Helgerson did not identify, Helgerson said Casey allowed publication of a paper he disagreed with, and this time, Casey turned out to be right.

As for "politicization," which Helgerson defined as the slanting of intelligence to serve political purposes, he said that "there is pressure on us to provide intelligence that reinforces policymaker preferences" as well as "temptations to skew our assessments to advance administration policy or a policy we may think should be adopted."

But he assured the analysts that "the bottom analytic line is and will remain our own" and that dissent must be tolerated. In his 2½ years as head of the directorate, Helgerson said he was confident the agency had "call[ed] them like we see them."

He defended the agency's work on two Soviet issues: the collapse of the empire and

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central authority and projections of the Soviet economy.

In describing "the clear messages of the hearings," Helgerson took note of some criticisms without mentioning the specific reports that were under fire: assessments concerning the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981 and a special national intelligence estimate on Iran in 1985.

In the first case, Helgerson simply said that "we will want to look anew at how we are incorporating alternative views and scenarios into our analysis," which was not done for a report making out a case for KGB involvement in the papal shooting. In the second case, Helgerson suggested a fresh look at "how we describe the implications for the U.S. of less likely outcomes," an apparent reference to the overstated threat of Soviet inroads in Iran in 1985, a time when that was a lessening prospect.